



Christmas grace

Metro-area families received a helping hand from the Baptist Mission Center to brighten their holidays.

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Third o-time's the charm

The Thunder leaves Philly victorious after an epic game, winning 119-117.

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THE OKLAHOMAN



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OKC district plans to disregard suggested Confederate names

Three schools will be renamed

BY TIM WILLERT

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Although hundreds of people voted to keep the names of Confederate leaders on three elementary schools, Oklahoma City School Board members

said Friday it won't matter. "It doesn't mean anything. The decision's made, and the names are going to be changed," member Mark Mann said. "The encouraging thing is there are a lot of good names, a lot of people who are worthy of having a school named after them."

In an anonymous online survey 1,100 people weighed in on possible replacement names for Jackson, Lee and Stand Watie elementary schools in south Oklahoma City.

The names of Confederate generals Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Issac Stand Watie received the most votes with more than 300 each, but several people who made sig-

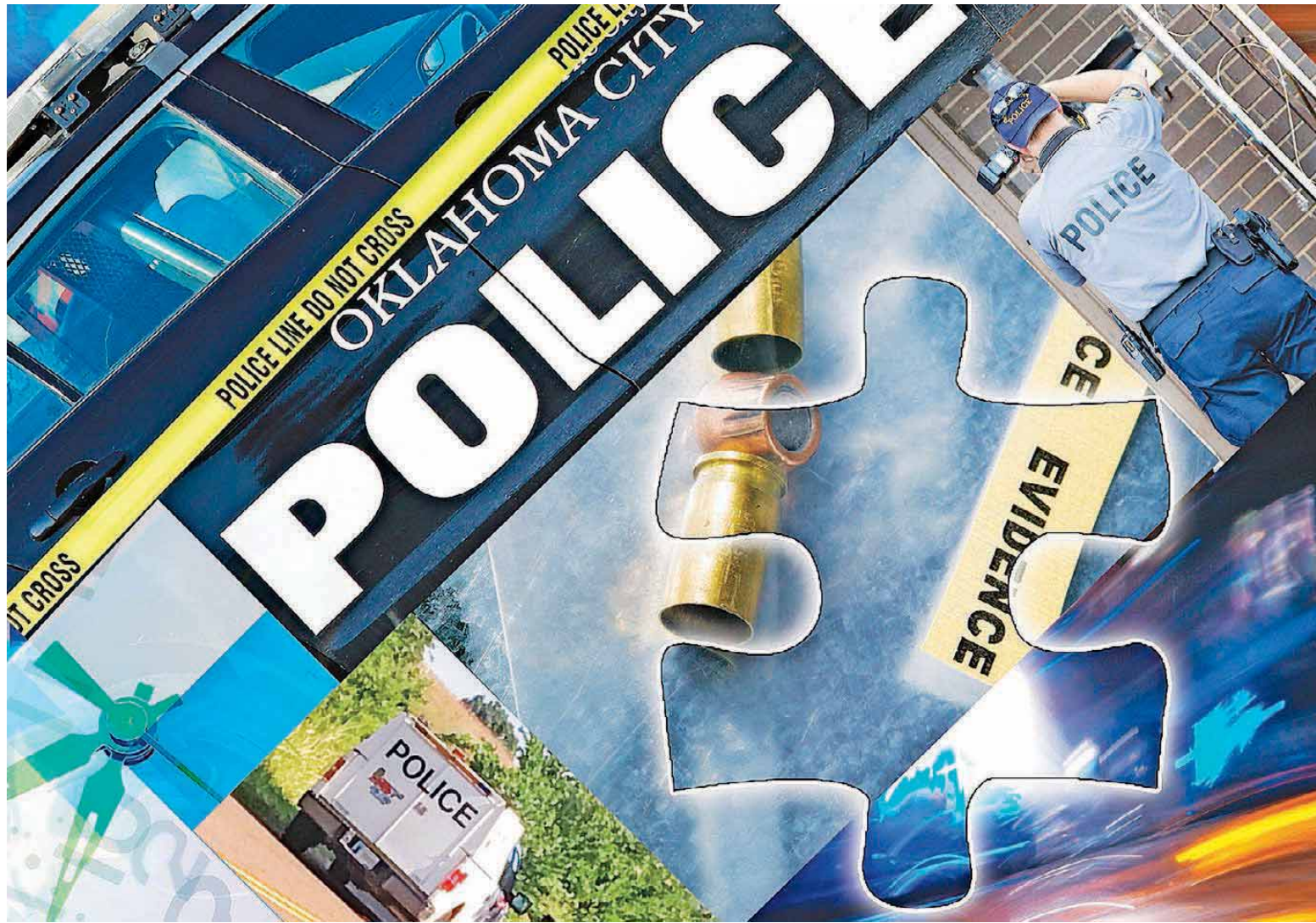
nificant contributions at the state and local level also were popular with voters.

Wayne Dempsey (182 votes) was a minister, youth mentor and former Oklahoma City school board member. Clara Luper (107) was a civil rights activist and educator in Oklahoma City. Wilma Mankiller (29) was the first woman to be principal chief of the Okla-

homa-based Cherokee Nation. Ralph Ellison (23) was a poet and novelist who played football at Douglass High School.

Said one survey respondent: "As a longtime personal friend and fellow parishioner of the late Dr. Dempsey and being aware of his lifetime work and sacrifices made as a teacher,

SEE NAMES, 2A



PAST HOMICIDES

Medical examiners and homicide detectives reassemble the puzzle pieces to form a picture of a violent death

BY MATT DINGER

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On the night of July 14, 2001, Ronald Deshell Steele was shot three times.

Two weeks ago, one of those bullets finally killed him.

One bullet went through his left forearm. Another went into his left shoulder, and the third — and ultimately fatal — round pierced the left side of his chest, according to the police report.

Steele, 51, died of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm and atherosclerosis due to hypertension, said Amy Elliott, spokeswoman for the state medical examiner's

office. His death was ruled a homicide, she said.

But the man who reportedly shot Steele will not face a murder charge, as the shooting with intent to kill count was dismissed in 2003 in exchange for a plea agreement in other cases, Oklahoma City police Sgt. Gary Knight said.

Steele's death is not the only Oklahoma City homicide this year that occurred more than a decade after a bullet found a victim.

Isjanna McKay James, 10, died April 29. She was 8 months old when she was shot in the head during an apparent drive-by shooting in February 2007. James was asleep in the front room of a house in the 4200 block of NE 16 when the bul-

let pierced her skull. A decade later, that wound was responsible for her death.

Isjanna's shooter — and now killer — has never been found.

Determining the cause and manner of death in retrospect comes down to a totality of the circumstances, said Dr. Michael Baden, a forensic scientist and physician.

"The critical interpretation or evaluation is: Would he still be alive today if that happened 16 years ago?" Baden said. "Usually, it would not be the arm or an extremity, it would be some damage to his heart or lungs from the gunshot wound to the chest that festered and, after many

SEE HOMICIDE, 3A

OKLAHOMA CAPITOL

Only one goal listed for special session

BY DALE DENWALT

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Lawmakers returning to the Oklahoma Capitol on Monday have been given one job — provide enough funding to avoid a Medicaid rate cut.

Gov. Mary Fallin's executive order issued late Friday lists just one subject the Legislature can consider.

Unlike the previous special session call in September, Fallin did not ask lawmakers to provide long-term fixes to the state budget or consider a teacher pay raise.

Her executive order also doesn't say where the money should come from, which could make it a quick special session. Earlier efforts to raise revenue ended with a legislative stalemate that lasted weeks.

Appropriation bills require far fewer votes than measures that raise tax revenue and lawmakers can simply draw existing funds from elsewhere instead of raising new money.

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority lost \$70 million when the state Supreme Court struck down the Legislature's \$1.50-per-pack fee on cigarettes. In special session, lawmakers restored \$22.8 million for the authority, which oversees Oklahoma's Medicaid program, called SoonerCare.

In a statement, Fallin said she is still negotiating with legislative leadership on long-term budget solutions.

"This week's discussions

SEE SESSION, 2A

OU accuser says she's starting next chapter of her life

BY BROOKE PRYOR AND NOLAN CLAY

Staff Writers

NORMAN — The woman who accused an Oklahoma running back of rape said Friday she had made an "adamant fight for justice" but is now moving on to the next chapter of her life.

In a one-page statement, Courtney J. Thornton, 23,

stood by her accusation against Rodney Anderson and criticized prosecutors for refusing to charge him.

She said her faith in the Oklahoma criminal justice system has been diminished.

Also Friday, she dropped her victim protective order case against Anderson, who has said he never forced himself on her. A hearing had been set for

Monday in Cleveland County District Court.

The Oklahoman does not normally report the name of a victim or possible victim of sex crimes. In this instance, Thornton identified herself in her statement Friday and in her Dec. 4 request for a protective order.

Prosecutors, who identified Thornton by name, announced

Thursday that Anderson would not be charged because of conflicts between what his accuser told her friends and what she told police.

Prosecutors pointed out the accuser had acknowledged that she never told Anderson to stop during his time at her Norman apartment.

One friend told police Thornton had said "this would be a

'great thing' for her political career following the Air Force," *The Oklahoman* has learned. The friend told police Thornton had said "female-empowered political organizations would love something like this."

In her statement to the media, Thornton criticized prosecutors for both what

SEE OU, 2A

TODAY'S PRAYER

God of joy, help us to celebrate with family and friends this season of love and happiness. Amen.

Business	1C	Life	1D
Classified	1E	Opinion	8A
Comics	8E	Real Estate	1F
Deaths	7A	Sports	1B

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